

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

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S E C R E T MONROVIA 1190

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (CARTER, JIMMY)

SUBJECT: THE PRESIDENT'S TRIP

REF: STATE 42624

1. AM DELIGHTED IT APPEARS PRESIDENT CARTER WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE STOP-OVER IN LIBERIA. ALSO CERTAIN THE GOL WOULD WELCOME VISIT AND OFFER FULLEST COOPERATION IN MEETING USG REQUIREMENTS.

2. WITH REFERENCE TO QUESTIONS RAISED IN PARA 2 REFTTEL, BELIEVE IT MAY BE MOST USEFUL TO PROPOSE THREE OPTIONS. EACH OPTION WILL BE ACCOMPANIED BY A BRIEF DESCRIPTION AND MY RECOMMENDATIONS WILL FOLLOW.

3. OPTION 1. AIRPORT STOP-OVER. GOL HAD JUST DEDICATED AND OPENED NEW TERMINAL BUILDING AT ROBERTSFIELD AND PRESIDENTIAL LOUNGE THERE WOULD PROVIDE REASONABLE VENUE FOR CONVERSATION BETWEEN PRESIDENTS. GOL MIGHT ALSO WISH TO ARRANGE SOME SORT OF CATERED LUNCHEON IN SECOND FLOOR TERRACE AREA OF TERMINAL FOR PRESIDENTIAL PARTY. ONLY NEGATIVE ASPECT THIS OPTION IS THAT IT WOULD BE THE LEAST SATISFACTORY IN TERMS OF PROVIDING PRESIDENT CARTER AND PARTY WITH OPPORTUNITY TO SEE SOMETHING OF LIBERIA

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AND DOES NOT GO BEYOND MEETING AT ROBERTSFIELD BETWEEN PRESIDENTS ROOSEVELT AND BARCLAY DURING SECOND WORLD WAR. IT ALSO UNDOUBTEDLY WOULD BE LEAST SATISFACTORY OPTION TO GOL. WOULD GUESS THAT TIME SPAN FOR ARRIVAL/ DEPARTURE CEREMONIES (21-GUN SALUTE, REVIEW OF TROOPS, ETC.), PRESIDENTIAL CONFERENCE TIME AND LUNCHEON WOULD BE APPROXIMATELY 3 1/2 HOURS.

4. OPTION 2. VISIT TO BENTOL (PRESIDENT TOLBERT'S BIRTH-PLACE). PRESIDENT CARTER WOULD ARRIVE AT ROBERTSFIELD WHERE HE WOULD BE RECEIVED BY PRESIDENT TOLBERT. TRADITIONAL CEREMONIES (21-GUN SALUTE, ETC.) FOLLOWED BY DRIVE THROUGH FIRESTONE PLANTATION WITH TEN-MINUTE VISIT TO FIRESTONE HOSPITAL. THIS WOULD PROVIDE EXCELLENT DEMONSTRATION OF LIBERIAN-U.S. COOPERATION AND ILLUSTRATE EXTENT OF LIBERIANIZATION OF ADVANCED SCIENTIFIC FACILITY. IT WOULD ALSO UNDERSCORE PRESIDENT CARTER'S OWN DESIRE, AS RECENTLY STATED IN A PERSONAL LETTER TO ALL AMBASSADORS (STATE 014670), TO INCREASE SUPPORT THE USG GIVES AMERICAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY ABROAD. PROCEED TO CAREYSBURG FOR DRIVE THROUGH-ONLY VIEW OF VOA COMMUNICATIONS FACILITY (LARGEST TRANSMITTER SITE IN AFRICA AND WHERE WE ARE INCREASING TRANSMITTER STRENGTH TO PERMIT MORE PROGRAMMING BEAMED TOWARD SOUTHERN AFRICA). ON TO BENTOL CITY. PRESIDENT CARTER COULD BE EXPECTED TO PAY BRIEF COURTESY VISIT TO RESTORED BIRTH-PLACE OF PRESIDENT TOLBERT AND THEN PROCEED TO PRESIDENT TOLBERT'S SMALL GUEST HOUSE FOR INTIMATE PRESIDENTIAL MEETING. WORKING LUNCH COULD BE LAID ON AT PRESIDENT TOLBERT'S RESIDENCE FOR PRESIDENT CARTER'S ENTOURAGE AND AN EQUAL NUMBER OF LIBERIAN FUNCTIONARIES. RETURN TO ROBERTSFIELD FOR DEPARTURE CEREMONIES. DRIVE FROM ROBERTSFIELD TO BENTOL WITH SUGGESTED STOP-OVERS WOULD
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TAKE APPROXIMATELY 45 MINUTES (DISTANCE ABOUT 18 MILES). ESTIMATED DURATION OF VISIT IN LIBERIA FOR OPTION 2 WOULD BE FIVE TO SIX HOURS.

5. OPTION 3. OVERNIGHT STOP IN MONROVIA. ARRIVAL CEREMONIES AT ROBERTSFIELD WOULD BE AS IN OPTION 2. FROM THERE MOTORCADE WOULD PROCEED DIRECTLY TO MONROVIA AND THE SUGGESTED FIRST STOP, THE US-FINANCED JFK MEMORIAL HOSPITAL (UNDER MOTORCADE CIRCUMSTANCES TRAVEL TIME ROBERTSFIELD TO JFK APPROXIMATELY 30-35 MINUTES). AFTER 10-MINUTE VISIT JFK, WHICH IS ALSO CENTER FOR NEW AID-SPONSORED RURAL OUTREACH HEALTH PROGRAM, PRESIDENT CARTER WOULD PROCEED TO EXECUTIVE MANSION (5-MINUTE TRIP) FOR PRIVATE TALKS WITH PRESIDENT TOLBERT. SUBSEQUENTLY THERE WOULD BE TIME FOR REST WHICH COULD BE FOLLOWED BY DINNER--THIS MIGHT BE WORKING DINNER--AT MANSION. THE NEXT MORNING AFTER PRIVATE BREAKFAST THERE COULD BE TIME FOR SECOND SHORT CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE PRESIDENTS AND THEN IMMEDIATE DEPARTURE FOR ROBERTSFIELD, DEPARTURE CEREMONIES, AND WHEELS UP. SINCE FIRESTONE PLANTATION IS ADJACENT TO ROBERTSFIELD, VISIT THERE AS IN

OPTION 2 COULD BE SCHEDULED PRIOR TO DEPARTURE.

6. UNDER OPTIONS 1 AND 2 IT IS ASSUMED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER WOULD BE REACHING ROBERTSFIELD MID-MORNING (FLYING TIME FROM IKEJA TO ROBERTSFIELD IS 2 HOURS 15 MINUTES, BUT ONE HOUR IS GAINED, I.E., DEPARTURE IKEJA 1000 HOURS LOCAL, ARRIVE ROBERTSFIELD 1115 HOURS LOCAL). UNDER OPTION 3 ASSUMPTION IS ARRIVAL MID TO LATE AFTERNOON ONE DAY AND DEPARTURE MID-MORNING NEXT DAY.

7. I RECOMMEND OPTION 3 AS BEST MEETING USG OBJECTIVES IN LIBERIA AND MOST ACCEPTABLE TO GOL AND AM SATISFIED THAT LIBERIANS WILL EXERCISE SUFFICIENT DISCIPLINE TO MEET OUR
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REQUIREMENTS VIS-A-VIS SIZE/NATURE OF DINNER, TIME CONSTRAINTS, ETC. ON BASIS OF MY KNOWLEDGE OF CHIEF OF STATE FACILITY ON SIXTH FLOOR OF EXECUTIVE MANSION (2 LARGE SUITES, 2 SMALL SUITES, AND 8 SINGLE ROOMS, ALL WITH BATH, PLUS DINING ROOM AND TWO SMALL OFFICES, ALL FACING SINGLE EASILY ACCESSIBLE AND MONITORED CORRIDOR) ALSO BELIEVE THIS COULD BE A PLEASANT AND USEFUL RESPITE TO THE TRAVEL-WEARY PARTY. MY SECOND PREFERENCE IS OPTION TWO WHICH I BELIEVE IS A VIABLE OPTION FROM BOTH USG AND GOL STANDPOINT.
CARTER

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